

R/T/F D20-1

Film Theory

Fall 2000

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TuTh 9-11, 325 Annie May Swift

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The course examines the major aesthetic and other theoretical issues developed in film theory and practice. Intended as an introduction (primarily) for students studying film theory for the first time, it studies aesthetic and cultural issues as a background to film theory, surveys the major figures and issues in film theory, and makes connections to related media and cultural analysis. The first quarter of the course is an introduction and historical overview. The second quarter concentrates on contemporary discussions in greater depth and will be not be taught in 2000-2001.

The course is organized as a reading, lecture, and discussion experience. Readings should be done in advance and brought to class. The lectures will provide a broad background to the readings, discuss some particular points in the readings in detail, and provide the experience of seeing how one theorist, the teacher, uses theory. Discussion of particular readings and screenings of some films (and excerpts) will be part of most classes. Students will be assigned several short essays and a take home final. Attendance is taken into account in the final grade.

Students without a background in film studies will concentrate on a core set of readings and background readings on film studies. Additional outside screenings will be expected to “fill in the gaps” for students who are not familiar with, say, Italian neorealism. Students with a background in film history and critical thought will do the core readings and a series of advanced theoretical essays and some commentary.

All students are required to have an e-mail address. Reading summaries and short essays will be distributed to the entire class by e-mail. In addition some readings will be on Electronic Reserve at the library.